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Poetry as An Alternative to Teach Literature for EFL Students in English Course

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to investigate how effectively poetry works as an alternative teaching strategy for literature to English as a foreign language (EFL) Students. Poetry is a form of verbal art that evokes feelings, reflects thoughts, and conveys human experiences in a beautiful and creative way. This study explores the connection between teaching methods and literary works, with a specific focus on the use of poetry by teachers to improve language proficiency in EFL students. The study emphasizes a teacher's insights as a useful resource within the framework of an English course in Pare Kediri, East Java. The instructor highlights how well poetry works as an alternative teaching strategy for enhancing students' basic language proficiency, which includes speaking, listening, writing, and reading. The study also looks at the many advantages of including poetry in teaching languages. Using poetry as an alternative method to teach literature develops their critical thinking skills and language fluency in addition to their language ability. Moreover, it fosters a greater awareness and respect of one's cultural history and raises learning motivation. The research highlights the educational advantages of adding poetry into the curriculum and highlights the possibility of poetry as an alternative teaching method for EFL students. It is a promising option for instructors looking for cutting-edge and effective teaching methods because of its effectiveness. In the end, this study's conclusions support the inclusion of poetry in the curriculum as an alternative method to improve EFL students' language learning opportunities.

Keywords: English as Foreign Language, Literature, Poetry

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Introduction

Literature is all written works that can be used as reference or reference material in carrying out various fields of research or scientific writing. In Indonesian, literature is better known as literature (Isro'iyah & Herminingsih, 2023). In the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), literature is reading material used in various activities, both intellectual and recreational. Literature is used as a reference because it is considered that in the literature there is a lot of valid data. Apart from that, literature is also considered to have many eternal benefits. In other words, literature will never die and will continue to exist and will continue to develop.

For students, literature serves as a valuable resource not only for education but also for information and knowledge acquisition (Aladini & Farahbod, 2020). Students can use literature as a tool to find a variety of knowledge; literature can be found both within and outside of libraries. Most students who wish to use books visit the library. One place to find books is the school library. One thing that will affect how well students learn is literature. In comparison to students who do not use this literature, those who visit the library frequently have a wider knowledge base. As a result, literature plays a crucial role in education, particularly in the development of English language skills. Literature has a lot of kinds, such as poetry, drama, song, novel, myth, short story, etc. In this case, the writer wants to discuss Poetry as an alternative to teach literature for EFL students in English Course.

Poetry is a form of verbal art that evokes feelings, reflects thoughts, and conveys human experiences in a beautiful and creative way. According to Darmawati, poetry as identical with entire meaning and without meaning poetry is nothing (2011). The Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI) defines poetry as a variety of literature with the use of language that is still bound by rhythm, arrangement of lines, stanzas or rhymes. Apart from that, poetry is a composition in language whose form is carefully chosen and arranged. Poetry is an art form that uses words carefully and artistically arranged to express human feelings, thoughts, or experiences. More than just the use of everyday language, poetry presents the richness of language and utilizes literary devices such as images, metaphors, symbols, and comparisons to create a profound aesthetic experience.

Poetry is a well-liked literary genre in Indonesia. Most age groups are familiar with and enjoy poetry. Poetry always has a category in literary contests alongside novels and so on. Aside from its aesthetic value, poetry is thought to be an effective tool for language learning,

especially English. Poetry is simpler than other literature and doesn't require a lot of reading time. According to one of the teacher who was interviewed with the initials Capt D claimed that learning English through poetry is easier than learning English through. He said, "*First, poetry is simpler than novels. It's simple in the sense that it's easy to carry everywhere, then secondly, it doesn't waste too much time. Because poetry is not permanent, like a novel that must be finished, it must take time and need calm. so that poetry is simpler to use as a reference in teaching.*

Poems are cited by the teacher in English classes and are used to assess students' language proficiency. In addition, poetry's non-formative nature makes it a powerful tool for brain stimulation in students (Finch, 2003). That means that when the students are assigned the task of writing a poem, their minds will combine fact and fiction and allow them to be as creative as they can without being constrained by the structure of the writing.

Poetry's application in English classes is to enhance the curriculum, the first stage in the process was to look into different forms of literacy. The goal is to combine older and modern works in order to foster a greater respect for language and creativity. To allow students to write and study poetry in the same classroom, it's important to find a balance between the two. As The educator or teacher who follows this route, they have to take care to foster an atmosphere that encourages interpretation, originality, and an actual appreciation of the poetic form. Learning poetry as literature work could improve basic skills. Basic English skills are the basis of learning English in terms of literature and linguistic elements. There are four (4) basic aspects that students must master before moving on to more intense learning stages.

The first basic English skill is reading. With reading skills, students can increase their knowledge of English (Aladini & Farahbod, 2020). Therefore, this skill is very suitable for students to master, to help the process of understanding poetry. The second basic English skill is listening. This listening skill can be the most challenging skill for students. In listening skills, a person is required to be able to listen to what other people say (Kilag et al., 2023). But not only that, someone who listens must also be able to interpret what he hears, so that understanding what the other person is saying in poetry is more attractive because of the new word choice. The third basic English skill is speaking. Speaking is almost the same as listening, namely a skill that is quite challenging for students to learn. Speaking skills are the

most important skills used to communicate in English, apart from listening. In learning to speak, students only need to speak more in English. By speaking in poetry, someone can practice it by speaking English to themselves, or to other people, especially people who are already fluent in English, because that person can help correct the words they say (Rao, 2019). The fourth basic English skill is writing. This skill is no less challenging than other skills. Currently, writing skills are also quite important, apart from being able to be used for communication, with writing skills a person can create creative words in writing such as poetry (Yu et al., 2019).

The observations that have been made occurred in the English course. As we know, an English course is a training program aimed at helping someone learn English. This course can be taken by anyone, regardless of educational background or age. The main aim of an English course is to help one understand, speak, read and write English well. In this English Courses, students can take the course online or offline. Online courses are usually carried out through platforms such as Skype, Zoom, Google Meet or other applications that allow someone to study online using a computer or mobile phone. Meanwhile, offline courses are usually carried out in special classes provided by language schools or other language training institutions.

These materials in this English course are usually taught sequentially, starting from the most basic to the higher level. Apart from that, English courses are also usually equipped with exercises that aim to help someone practice what they have learned. The purpose of this study is to find out what learning methods, especially literature, are used by English course mentors in teaching and also identify the reasons and factors that caused the mentor to choose this learning method in teaching. So, researchers can easily identify how big the influence of literary works is on the learning system outside the school scope.

For English as Foreign Language (EFL) students, teaching poetry as a literary alternative in an English course is a flexible and interesting way to improve language learning and cross-cultural comprehension. According to academic research, using poetry in EFL classes helps students become more fluent in the language, develop their critical thinking skills, and gain an appreciation for the subtleties of the English language. Research by Fithriani (2021) highlights integrating poetry in English writing classes is even more challenging since the curriculum guiding the objectives, contents, materials and methods used to carry out English teaching and learning process in this country is designed, developed, and mandated by the

government. Many knowledgeable literature readers mention that they do not know how to assess the value and worth of a verse or even that there is simply no way to estimate it, that poetry is not meant to be assumed or assessed, only imprecisely "sensed." (Khosravishakib, 2017) . Furthermore, this values need to be introduced to students from an early age because they grow and live in a plural country that is Indonesia.

Moreover, scholars like Bredtmann et al. (2021) advocate for the use of diverse poets and poetic forms, catering to students' varied interests and learning styles. Utilizing poems from different cultures and historical periods exposes learners to diverse linguistic patterns and socio-cultural contexts, fostering a deeper understanding of English literature and its evolution. Additionally, practical classroom applications of teaches poetry offers both challenges and promises for student engagement and response.

In conclusion, the integration of poetry in EFL literature instruction serves as an effective pedagogical tool. Its multifaceted nature not only enhances language acquisition but also nurtures an appreciation for literature and cultural diversity among EFL students in English courses, contributing to a more holistic and enriching learning experience.

Several possible research issues and concerns are raised when considering the use of poetry as an alternative method for teaching literature to English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in English courses. These call for additional research and consideration in this area of education. The choice and modification of poems for EFL students is one common problem. Finding texts that correspond with students' language ability levels and cultural backgrounds is difficult due to the diversity of poetic forms, themes, and linguistic difficulties. It takes careful selection and pedagogical expertise to determine which poems strike the right mix between linguistic challenge and engagement without overloading students or reducing the scope of the literary experience.

The diverse learning styles and interests of EFL students are a significant area of concern. Developing instructional strategies that meet the requirements of various learners becomes more difficult when dealing with the variety present in the classroom, which includes a range of linguistic ability and cultural backgrounds. While some students may benefit more from audio or physical approaches, others might do well with visual assistance or interactive activities. A relevant area of research is finding a balance between allowing variation and ensuring through learning outcomes.

Also, analyzing how well poetry-based education works to improve EFL learners' language skills and literary appreciation is an important study issue. Reliable assessment tools and methodologies are needed to measure the effects of poetry implementation on language proficiency, critical thinking, and cultural understanding. Extensive research is also required to determine the transferability of information outside of the classroom and the extended use of language abilities. Lastly, a study subject that has to be studied is how well-prepared and trained teachers are to apply poetry-based instruction for EFL students. An area for investigation is to look into how comfortable instructors are incorporating poetry into the curriculum, how well-versed in it as a pedagogical tool, and what resources and training programs are available for successful implementation. By tackling these research issues, we may make a substantial contribution to improving pedagogical strategies and optimizing the advantages of teaching poetry to EFL students in English courses.

Methods

A qualitative research method was employed in this study. Detailed observation is the main focus of the qualitative method. The goal of qualitative research methodologies is to provide a thorough explanation of a phenomenon through data collection. In order to gather information, the authors spoke with a teacher in one of the English courses—the English town of Pare. The authors pose a number of questions about literature that will be posed to teachers. Due to the impossibility to hold offline meetings, the author conducted an online interview with the instructor even though they could not speak with each other face-to-face. The authors of this research developed conversation themes based on the findings from these interviews.

In addition, the book Teaching Character Education through Literature by Karen E. Bohlin, which the author obtained in accordance with the instructions of the resource person, strengthens this method. Capt D, the mentor in one of the English courses in Pare City, used this book as a reference guide when teaching. This book describes how a teacher combines character education into lessons. "*Understanding how students learn is crucial for teachers. Poem writing encourages students to consider both fact and fiction, and although literature is not formative, it could stimulate their interest in the poem.*" (Capt D). This assertion suggests

that this book is excellent for creating students' moral imaginations and complementing the literature learning system.

Result and Discussion

This research was conducted by interviewing one of the teachers or mentors at one of the English courses in Pare, Kediri, East Java. In this research, the subject was a mentor whose profession was teaching English using poetry as an alternative method. The number of research data sources is based on the consideration that qualitative research is more concerned with large amounts of information than the large number of informants.

The results of an interview with a teacher who teaches in this course reveals that using poetry as an alternative method is working to applying in English Course. It is proven by Capt D's statement who is one of teacher in English Course, *"Literature is not formative. This stimulates students' thinking to create two special aspects of poetry, namely fact and fiction. So that the emergence of brain stimulation makes them think creatively. This also applies when students have written poetry and will try to read it. Automatically, they will learn to pronounce each word in the sentence well. If they feel strange about their reading or perhaps their writing, of course they will correct it and make it an experience for the future. In contrast to other formative work which only makes them work according to rules."* So, learning poetry as an alternative method can improve students' Language Proficiency, Cultural Sensitivity, Enhanced Critical Thinking, Engagement and Motivation.

Based on the statement above which states the result of using poetry as an alternative method reveals that using poetry can increasing language proficiency, Cultural Sensitivity, Enhanced Critical Thinking, Engagement and Motivation. Increasing language proficiency involves consistent practice, such as reading actively, writing regularly, listening attentively, and speaking actively (Kamal et al., 2023). For instance, when it comes to reading poetry, usually word clarity and adding expressions are very common to use. Especially when we are poetry without text, we should pay attention to intonation and stress which will give a strong impression in the meaning of each word. Also adding some gestures make it looks better.

Using resources such as dictionaries and engaging in conversations with native speakers can also enrich language understanding and give students confidence (Dzhukelov, 2014). Courses or formal learning programs can also provide additional structure and

guidance. The main key is consistency and variety in language practice so that students show an increase in vocabulary, comprehension and language expression after engaging with poetry, which shows the efficacy of alternative approaches.

Cultural sensitivity refers to an individual's or group's ability to understand, appreciate, and respond meaningfully to cultural differences. This includes awareness of the norms, values, customs, and perceptions that differ between cultures (Creely, 2019). People who have cultural sensitivity are usually able to communicate effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds, avoid stereotypes or prejudice, and respect diversity (Afdian & Wahyuni, 2020). Cultural sensitivity also involves the ability to understand cultural contexts that may influence interactions and decision making. Poetry exposes students to diverse cultural perspectives, fosters a deeper understanding of the nuances embedded in language and increases cross-cultural awareness.

Improving critical thinking involves developing the ability to carefully analyze, assess, and synthesize information. This involves the ability to question assumptions, identify valid arguments, and make informed decisions. Critical thinking exercises can include solving problems, evaluating sources of information, and logically constructing arguments. Active reading, discussion, and exposure to various perspectives can also help hone critical thinking skills. The main goal is to develop the ability to think more deeply, rationally, and objectively in dealing with complex information and situations such as studying literature. (Obloberdiyevna & Odilkhonovna, 2022) states that they are able to express their ideas and get past their writing difficulties through improve critical thinking. Analyzing elements of poetry such as metaphor, symbolism, and rhythm hone students' critical thinking skills, encouraging them to interpret and appreciate literature at a higher level. Involvement and motivation are two key factors that are interrelated in encouraging individuals to engage in an activity or achieve certain goals.

1. Engagement

This reflects the degree to which a person is involved or actively engaged in a task, job, or activity. Engagement involves attention, focus, and active participation (Dzhukelov, 2014). When someone feels involved, they tend to be more passionate and committed to what they do.

2. Motivation

This is an internal or external drive that drives a person to act or achieve a certain goal. Motivation can come from a desire for achievement, personal satisfaction, recognition, or external rewards (Dzhukelov, 2014). A person's level of motivation can influence the extent to which they strive to achieve a goal or complete a task.

Strong motivation can be strongly connected to high engagement (Rahardjo & Pertiwi, 2020). A person may be more motivated to give an activity all they have or produce positive outcomes when they get involved in it. On the other hand, a high motivation level could encourage more participation in an activity. Each of them is always improving and creating a positive interaction to achieve the goal or task more effectively (Washington-Nortey et al., 2022). For example, using poems effectively becomes a strong motivator since students show higher levels of engagement and motivation when compared to monotonous material. Enhancing linguistic proficiency is the goal of utilizing and applying poetry to boost learning motivation (Zamzami et al., 2023). Students' talents will rise in step with their desire to enhance the learning process. Students can add vocabulary and comprehension to each word in the poem if the fundamental skills are satisfied, or if they have mastered the material in this context. In order to make it simple for students to compose poetry, whether they do so regularly or spontaneously.

The more we use it in our learning. the more naturally students will be able to meet their language proficiency objectives (Light et al., 1987). Students will be greatly impacted by this as well. It is the responsibility as a teacher to keep students engaged in their studies by using a variety of engaging teaching strategies. Because of this, students will generally be more comfortable using language or literary works to communicate their thoughts or feelings.

Conclusion

Literature, especially poetry, serves as a fantastic tool to help students improve their language abilities. When exploring this topic, the author highlighted how poetry could be an effective substitute for traditional English literature courses in teaching students who are learning English as a foreign language (EFL). The discussion revealed that using poetry had several advantages for these students.

One significant benefit observed was an enhancement in language fluency. By engaging with poetry, students had the opportunity to improve their speaking fluency and pronunciation. Additionally, delving into poetry exposed students to different cultures, fostering cultural sensitivity and understanding of diverse perspectives. This not only broadened their knowledge but also enabled them to appreciate and respond to cultural differences.

Moreover, composing poetry encouraged enhanced critical thinking skills. The act of creating poems nurtured creativity with words, prompting students to think critically and imaginatively. Furthermore, students showed increased engagement and motivation in their learning process when using poetry. This active involvement allowed them to learn from their mistakes without hindrance, with teachers playing a crucial role in supporting and encouraging them to view mistakes as learning experiences.

So, literature, particularly poetry, proved to have a significant impact on the development of language skills among EFL students. It helped improve language fluency, cultural sensitivity, critical thinking, and motivation. This approach not only enriched their language abilities but also stimulated their overall engagement in learning which means so valuable to put on the curriculum.

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